

R 081703Z JUL 09  
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3840  
INFO ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
DIA WASHINGTON DC  
CIA WASHDC

UNCLAS CONAKRY 000396

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [XA](#) [GV](#)

SUBJECT: JULY 4 SPEECH DECLARES CNDD ILLEGITIMATE, GETS  
BROAD MEDIA COVERAGE

¶1. Summary: On Thursday, July 2, 2009, the U.S. Mission commemorated Independence Day in the Embassy atrium. Among the over 200 guests were representatives of the Government of Guinea, the diplomatic corps, international institutions, civil society, political parties and religious leaders. In a major speech, the Charge d'Affaires expressed grave concern over the illegal seizure of power by the CNDD and subsequent human rights abuses. He called on the CNDD to hold elections as soon as possible and reiterated the USG's willingness to support the democratic process. Many members of the international community praised the speech and asked for copies. The media provided extensive coverage, except for state-run RTG. End Summary.

¶2. In light of the December 2008 coup d'etat and subsequent suspension of USG assistance, the Embassy decided to have a low-key Independence Day celebration with no high-ranking Guinean officials or members of the CNDD present. Nevertheless the turnout exceeded expectations despite the threat of bad weather during the rainy season. A Pickering Fellow who is also a trained opera singer sang the Star Spangled Banner while a Guinean singer sang the local national anthem.

¶3. The highlight of the day was the speech given by Charge d'Affaires Kent Brokenshire. In it he said the military junta had illegally seized power in December 2008. The Charge said the military junta violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by denying the Guinean people the inalienable right to choose their own government. He said the situation is worse now than it was under the regime of Lansana Conte because the people have not voted for a single person in the junta-controlled government. He called for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections as soon as possible. The Charge also expressed deep concern over the increase in human rights abuses since the December coup. Noting a strong and continuing friendship between the people of Guinea and the people of the U.S., the Charge reiterated the USG's commitment to help Guinea achieve its full potential.

¶4. The speech was very well received by Guineans as well as members of the international community in the audience. Several members of the diplomatic corps praised the Charge personally and said they wished their own embassies could say the same things the US Embassy was saying. The public affairs section could barely keep up with the demand as they printed out copies of the speech throughout the reception.

¶5. The private media in Guinea provided extensive coverage of the speech. The independent newspaper La Lance used the headline 'Les Verites du Charges d'Affaires' (The Truths of the Charge d'Affaires). Le Standard called it a commemoration placed under the seal of firmness with regard to the junta. Radio Nostalgie aired a report on the speech the same day and organized a debate the following Saturday, July 4th, involving a Guinean expatriate and a local journalist. Radio EspaceFM aired a substantial portion of the speech, while Radio FamiliaFM quoted the portion of the speech saying the junta illegally seized power in violation of the UDHR. The website Aminata.com also published a story on the speech.

¶6. The Embassy invited the state-run RTG-TV to the event and a cameraman filmed the entire speech. However, RTG never ran the story and according to a source at the station they never will. According to the source the Director General of RTG, Ibrahim Ahmed Barry, killed the story, saying that it was too political. Barry was appointed by the CNDD in May in a major shakeup of the senior leadership at the state-run media outlets.

¶7. Comment: The refusal of RTG to broadcast the speech is significant because in the past (before the shakeup) they were willing to run even critical speeches by the Embassy. However, the extensive coverage of private and independent media largely offsets the failure of RTG to cover the story. Private radio has by far the largest audience in Conakry and publication of the speech in the independent newspapers ensures that the message reaches an elite audience as well the common man.

BROKENSHIRE